

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar, II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

We are writing regarding the “Determination that a Public Health Emergency Exists Nationwide as the Result of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus” approval which is set to expire on July 25, 2020, and demanding that this Determination be extended and continue to be extended until the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided.¹

Massachusetts has been devastated by COVID-19. As of July 14, 2020 the Commonwealth has had at least 105,986 COVID-19 cases and a total of 8,125 deaths.² Hospitals have weathered surges in hospitalizations, providers have been overwhelmed with patients, and thousands of people have lost their jobs as the Commonwealth grapples with historic unemployment rates.³ Massachusetts needs and deserves robust and substantial support from the federal government.

Effective on January 27, the public health emergency determination has been a lifeline for Massachusetts. This determination ensured that Massachusetts would be able to furnish healthcare services they otherwise would not. It enabled the Commonwealth to waive certain Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP requirements, expand the healthcare workforce, and implement critical programs, such as the expansion for telemedicine services. Telemedicine ensures that people get the necessary services they need while maintaining their health and safety and that of the public’s.

As states across this country start to reopen, cases are reaching historic heights on a daily basis.⁴ Massachusetts has been one of the few that has not experienced another surge and it must remain that way. One key step is to ensure that none of the services provided by the “Determination that a Public Health Emergency Exists Nationwide as the Result of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus” disappear. Therefore, as this determination is set to expire in a few short days, we demand that you immediately extend it and guarantee it remain in place until the United States has seen the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ <https://www.phe.gov/emergency/news/healthactions/phe/Pages/2019-nCoV.aspx>

² <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-dashboard-july-14-2020/download>

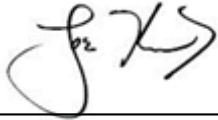
³ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.nr0.htm>

⁴ <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/26-states-report-increase-in-average-daily-coronavirus-cases/>

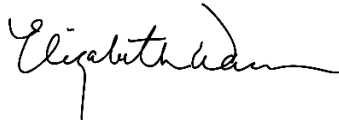
When the pandemic does finally subside, we ask that you give states a six week notification to allow for the necessary transitions from all temporary programs and policies.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



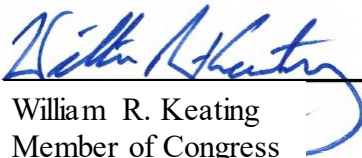
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



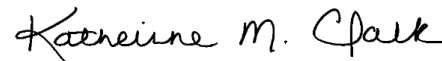
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress